Mission:
To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.

Florida HEALTH

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Scott A. Rivkees, MD
State Surgeon General

12/07/20 COVID19 Update - Gulf County

Snapshot: 11/23-12/07

Positivity during this timeframe: 10%*

Positive tests this timeframe: 65

Total tests this timeframe: 652

*Positivity = # of people who test positive in a week divided by all the people tested that week. Excludes people who have: previously tested positive, and all positive and negative inmate tests.

State Positivity:
7.7 %
(as of 12/06/20)

Median Age
in Gulf: 48

Ongoing County Totals:

Unduplicated positive tests (rapid antigen and PCR): 1,096

Positive inmates: 264

Positive long-term care (staff and residents): 76

Overall hospitalizations: 63

Total deaths: 22

For the full county COVID-19 profile report please visit:
http://ww11.doh.state.fl.us/comm/_partners/covid19_report_archive/cases-monitoring-and-pui-information/county-report/county_reports_latest.pdf

Available hospital bed capacity, including ICU capacity in neighboring counties, can be found using this link.
https://bi.ahca.myflorida.com/t/ABICC/views/Public/HospitalBedsCounty?:isGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&:embed=y

Summary of cases associated with schools:
http://ww11.doh.state.fl.us/comm/_partners/covid19_report_archive/school-reports/schools_latest.pdf

For Daily Gulf County COVID-19 Updates straight to your phone: text GULFCOVID to 888777
Florida Department of Health in Gulf County: 850-227-1276
Florida Department of Health in Franklin County: 850-653-2111
There is also a hotline available at **866-779-6121** or email COVID-19@flhealth.gov.
Follow the CDC.gov website for the latest guidance on COVID-19 and check out Floridahealth.gov to keep up with state-specific updates.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN TODAY'S UPDATE:
- Gulf County COVID-19 Profile Report (see link above)
- Updated County Health Department Message (see below, page 2)

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Vaccination Efforts
The Department of Health will approach COVID-19 vaccination efforts similarly to the integrated planning structure of the H1N1 pandemic, influenza vaccinations and Hepatitis A vaccination program.
The first phase will be used to prioritize:

- first responders
- hospital workers
- and residents and staff of long-term care facilities.

The Department is in the process of enrolling other hospitals throughout the state. The vaccine will be shipped directly to the hospitals when available. Florida's COVID-19 vaccination plan will continue to be modified and developed as more details become available. For more information see, Gov. DeSantis' update here: https://youtu.be/5i_mCGdT-Gg

The CDC has updated the quarantine time frame. While a 14-day quarantine is the current recommendation, there are some additional options for asymptomatic close contacts to end quarantine earlier. As a reminder, close contacts are those individuals who have been within six feet of an infected individual for a cumulative of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, regardless of mask usage.

1. If an asymptomatic close contact gets tested by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test on Day 6 or later and receives a negative result, then they may end quarantine after completion of Day 7.

2. Without testing, an asymptomatic close contact may end quarantine after completion of Day 10.

In both scenarios, individuals need to correctly and consistently wear face mask, practice social distancing, exercise good hand hygiene, avoid close contact and crowds, and self-monitor for symptoms. For more information, please visit the CDC's Web page at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html.

Reminder: Pledge to Protect
To all Gulf County residents and visitors, don't forget to check visitgulf.com out to see which businesses have taken the Pledge to Protect! These places featured online are committed to creating a clean, safe and healthy environment for residents and visitors. Everyone is going to have to do their part to make sure that we minimize the spread of the virus moving forward. This means continuing to observe social distancing, wearing masks where social distancing is difficult, and following good hygiene practices. Most of all, be respectful and kind to others. Businesses, if you are being featured on the website, PLEASE ensure you are following the guidelines you have committed to. Many visitors are calling with a specific list of "safer" places to visit and those who took the pledge are being shared with callers. If you need more masks or hand sanitizer, please contact your local TDC at 850-229-7800.

This is our final _scheduled_ update; however, we will continue to update you periodically as information becomes available. For daily updates, data, and local counts check out Florida's COVID-19 dashboard. For questions about COVID-19 testing, including scheduling appointments and requesting results, please call our local office in Franklin at (850) 653-2111 or in Gulf at (850) 227-1276.

QUARTANTINE/ISOLATION FACTS

I tested positive for COVID19. When can I be around others (no longer infectious)? If you tested positive for COVID19, you need to stay at home and isolate per the guidance provided by public health officials. If you think or know you had COVID-19, and had symptoms, you can be with others after at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND at least 24 hours has passed with no fever without fever-reducing medication AND symptoms have improved. If you tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms, you can be with others after 10 days have passed since your test. If you develop symptoms after testing positive, follow the guidance above that includes fever and symptoms improving. Follow this link to stay tuned on updates: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html

CLOTH FACE COVERS/MASK

Why wear the mask in public?
Answer: My cloth face covering protects you. Your cloth face covering protects me. Although not a 100% guarantee, the use of masks has been proven using actual case investigations to dramatically reduce the spread of the virus. People who are infected can spread the virus before they develop symptoms or in the absence of symptoms. Wearing a cloth face covering may help prevent the spread of the virus by people who are infected and do not know it. Use of cloth face coverings continues to be a recommendation long-term prevention measures such as vaccines are being developed.

Cloth face coverings do not replace other protective measures. CDC still recommends that you stay at least 6 feet away from other people (social distancing), wash your hands frequently, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth….and your face covering. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on children under age 2.

If you or someone you love needs a cloth mask, please call 850-340-3016.
The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

TESTING
If you suspect you might have COVID19, please do not travel here. Please get a COVID19 test (nasal swab for active infection) in your community and know your results before you arrive. Stay home when you are sick and follow CDC guidelines. Visitors are also responsible for helping to keep our communities safe and healthy.

Call your health care provider first or if you are symptomatic to determine the need for testing. If a person thinks they have COVID-19, they should call their health care provider before going to their office so the provider can take precautions to prevent exposing other people. In some cases, they are going to meet you in the parking lot. It's just a precaution. We are really trying to keep our healthcare workers safe. Other patients safe. Review your signs, symptoms and travel history with your physician. Your provider is going to evaluate you for possible causes and rule out other respiratory illnesses (ex. Flu) before testing for COVID-19.

COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT EXPANDED TESTING PLAN
Florida Department of Health in Gulf County will provide FREE COVID-19 testing in Port St. Joe and Wewahitchka. Please call (850) 227-1276 to make an appointment.

COVID-19 REINFECTION
Available information from the CDC shows immunity for 90 days. There are no confirmed reports to date of a person being re-infected with COVID-19 within 3 months of initial infection.

A person who has had and recovered from COVID-19 may have low levels of virus in their bodies for up to 3 months after diagnosis. This means that if the person who has recovered from COVID-19 is retested within 3

months of initial infection, they may continue to have a positive test result, even though they are not spreading COVID-19. Meaning, they are no longer infectious to others. However, additional research is ongoing.

Therefore, if a person who has recovered from COVID-19 has new symptoms of COVID-19, the person may need an evaluation for reinfection, especially if the person has had close contact with someone infected with COVID-19. The person should isolate and contact a healthcare provider to be evaluated for other causes of their symptoms, and possibly retested.

More information can be found here: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fstrategy-discontinue-isolation.html

MENTAL HEALTH
COVID-19 have you feeling STRESSED/ANXIOUS/DEPRESSED/UNSURE? NEED SUPPORT? CALL 850-270-8911, available 9-5pm EST. If you are in need of immediate mental health services call one of the agencies below available 24/7:

- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- SAMSA Disaster Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 or the Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741-741
- Florida Blue launched a 24-hour, free emotional support helpline for all Floridians. Any Floridian – even if uninsured or insured by another plan – can call 833-848-1762 for support in managing feelings of stress, anxiety, grief or fear related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Counselors cannot provide information on COVID-19 testing or treatment.
- Big Bend Community Based Care oversees a wide network of community partners in the fields of mental health counseling, substance use disorder treatment and child protective services throughout an 18-county area in Northwest Florida, from Escambia to Madison counties. Florida residents can call the agency's hotline at 1-888-95-GetHelp or 1-888-954-3843 at any time, day or night, and staff a member will help connect them to a provider in their community, regardless of whether they have health insurance. For more information about Big Bend Community Based Care, visit BigBendCBCGetHelp.org.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
COVID-19 has upended children's daily lives, resulting in added stress and uncertainty. Studies show that adversity during childhood, including adversity stemming from natural disasters, can have lasting impacts on children's social emotional health. Fortunately, families can take steps to support and protect children's emotional well-being during the COVID-19 crisis. For more information visit the Nat'l Institute for Children's Health Quality site at **Article: Supporting Children's Health During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic**

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

GULF COUNTY COVID-19 RELIEF FUND
If you or someone you know has been financially impacted by COVID-19, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act may be able to help. The Gulf County Board of County Commissioners through the Gulf County S.H.I.P Program has received Corona Virus Relief Funds. Contact Apalachee Regional Planning Council at 850-448-6211 x 113 or go to http://gulfcounty-fl.gov/county_government/s_h_i_p to fill out an online application. For additional information and qualification guidelines AND to submit the completed application, contact Amber Zies at (407) 310-0198 or at azies@arpc.org or Donald Morgan at (256) 458-0232 or at dmorgan@arpc.org.

GULF COUNTY HURRICANE HOUSING RECOVERY PROGRAM
Were you a victim of Hurricane Michael? Do you need repairs to your home, or could you benefit from a one-bedroom mobile home? Is the income for your household very low? Contact the Gulf County SHIP Program at 850-229-6125 or visit: http://gulfcounty-fl.gov/county_government/s_h_i_p, look for the Hurricane Housing Recovery Program-Phase 3 Application.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT
There are several resources available for rural residents and business coping with the impact of COVID-19. Please visit the Rural Development Coronavirus Response page: https://www.rd.usda.gov/coronavirus

REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE
We encourage any Floridian whose employment has been negatively impacted as a result of COVID-19 to visit FloridaJobs.org and click on Reemployment Assistance Service Center to learn more about the program and watch a short video on how to apply. Click here for a direct link to instructions on how to apply for Reemployment Assistance. Select the hyperlink to download and view the Reemployment Assistance Resource Guide.

If you can't apply by email you can pick up a paper application and submit it by mail. Below is the following pick up locations for paper applications in Gulf County. For more information call 850-229-1641.
- Port St. Joe – CareerSource, 401 Peters St.

For information regarding assistance with utilities, rent/mortgages, food pantries, and other local disaster assistance, visit https://www.211.org/

CATHOLIC CHARITIES-GULF/ FRANKLIN COUNTIES:
Financial Emergency/Hardship: 850-763-0475

LOCAL UPDATES:

FOOD PANTRY LOCATIONS
- 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the Month-WIG Community Center, 401 Peters St., Port St. Joe
- Farm Share distribution will be twice a month, November 9th and 23rd at 4:00pm. Drive-thru pick up on a first come, first serve.
- Second Harvest of the Big Bend: 2nd Saturday of each month from 9:30-11:30, Honeyville Community Center, 240 Honeyville Park Road. (3 family per vehicle limit – all families do not have to be present to receive food. Please, no children.

PLEDGE TO PROTECT:
Coronavirus doesn't take a vacation, but it does travel. We know many businesses in Gulf County are stepping up to protect their employees and their staff. It hasn't been easy for them. They've survived Hurricane Michael and are now operating their business through a pandemic. Many have taken extra measures to protect their employees and customers. This deserves recognition and we are asking our businesses in Gulf County to take the Pledge to Protect!

Visit Pledge to Protect at https://www.visitgulf.com/pledgetoprotect/

What is Pledge to Protect?

Pledge to Protect is a voluntary program in which Gulf County tourism businesses commit to clean and healthy standards for their guests and employees to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

By taking the Pledge to Protect, businesses are committing to:
- Proper Use of Personal Protective Equipment
- Routine Cleaning and Disinfecting of Surfaces and Equipment
- Practicing Social Distancing and Minimized Contact
- Enforcing Any Sick Employees to Stay Home

Special thanks to the Gulf County Tourism Development Council for the creation of the logo, webpage and incentive promotion design and support. This project has been approved by the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT
The Franklin and Gulf County Health Departments will resume full clinic services. This includes annual physical exams, well woman exams, Florida Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, and other routine appointments. Some services will continue to be done curbside or over the phone to decrease unnecessary exposure. Please call 850-227-1276 to schedule an appointment! **Please do not bring visitors with you to your appointments.**

GOVERNOR UPDATES:

To see ALL of Gov. DeSantis Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, visit: https://www.flgov.com/covid-19/

STAY INFORMED:
To get the latest information, visit FloridaHealth.gov and follow on Social Media:
Florida Department of Health: Twitter @HealthyFla -or- Facebook Florida Department of Health (DOH)
Gulf/Franklin County Community Health Improvement Partners: Facebook Gulf/Franklin County Community Health Improvement Partners